REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE
INDIANA

A CONVENTION OF TRAVELLING MEN

By Harry Z. Griffin

THERE is a little button of blue and white, bearing the letters "T. P. A.," that is now worn in every State of the Union. It is of importance because it is the insignia of an organization that in the past six years has grown from an association with a trivial membership until now it has become the largest social and commercial organization of travelling men the world has ever known.

The Travelers' Protective Association of America, popularly termed the "T. P. A.," was originally organized in 1882, but for several years it had a precarious existence. On May 30, 1890, ten well known St. Louis travelling men decided to reorganize in a businesslike manner, and one of their first acts—that of incorporation under the laws of Missouri— was an indication of the new life that had entered into the association and which has since marked its rapid progress.

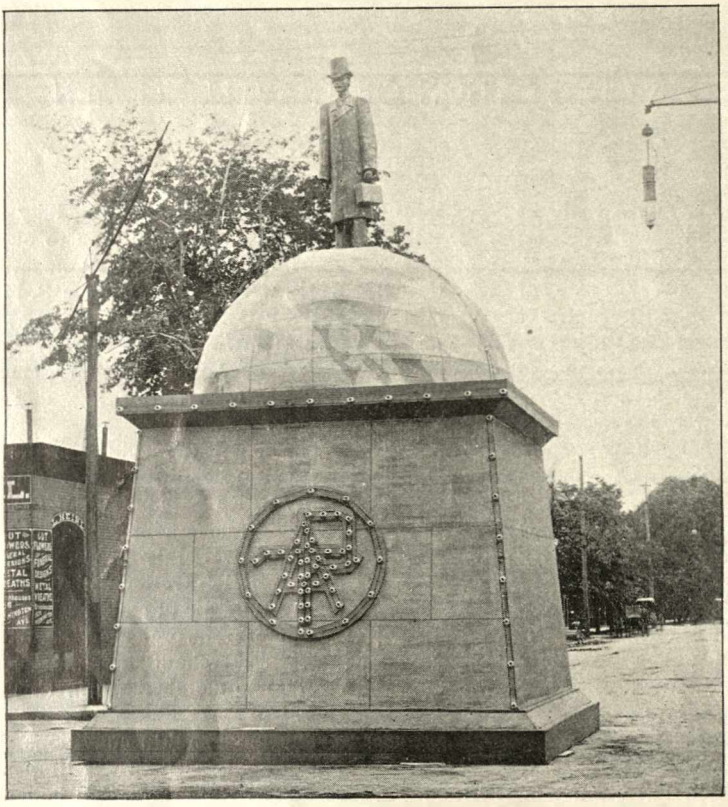
The main objects of the T. P. A., as outlined in the new articles of association, are to bring about a better acquaintance and more fraternal and binding feeling between persons engaged in the business of commercial travellers and in the buying and selling of merchandise at wholesale, and to that end to secure from hotels and all transportation companies just and equitable rates for commercial travellers as a class; to further elevate the social and moral character of the members of the association; to establish hospitals, if necessary, for the sick and the disabled, the one great object of the association being to create and establish a fraternal, beneficial association that would not be an organization for pecuniary reward or profit.

The ten men who, guided by wisdom and foresight, were able to outline so excellent a plan for organization and work, were Messrs. George S. McGrew, Murray Carleton, Louis T. LaBeaume, H. C. Gottfried, John C. Wilkinson, Joseph Trauer, C. H. Wickard, George E. Walker, L. A. Browning, and A. W. Houck.

The constitution outlines the following as the conditions for membership: "Any white male person of good moral character, not under the age of eighteen years or over sixty years, engaged as a commercial traveller as buyer or seller for a wholesale or commission house or manufacturers, or dealer, importer, commission merchant or manufacturer, is eligible to membership in this association."

The membership conditions thus admit not only active travelling men, but also their employers, this being one of the few organizations in existence in which employers and employees find many common interests. By this means the association is also given the advantage of retaining in its membership all travellers who have graduated from the "grip."

The general business headquarters are located at St. Louis. From the National Association are created the State Divisions, which have the power to grant charters to local organizations, known as Posts A, B, C, etc., in the order of their incorporation. The Missouri Division leads the State Divisions with a membership of over 1,800, with Illinois a close second and Indiana third. Post A., of St. Louis, has 1,575 members, making it the largest post. Post G, of Terre Haute, comes second



T. P. A. Convention in Terre Haute, Ind. Electric Statuary—"The Globe his Field"

with 412 members, ranking above Chicago, which is third with a membership of about 400.

One of the important benefits of the T. P. A. is the accident insurance feature. The annual dues are $10 and for this sum the members are entitled to all of the privilages of the association and in addition thereto receive a weekly indemnity of $25 in case of accidental injury from any cause, or in the event of accidental death $5,000 is paid to the heirs. The National Association has since 1890 paid in weekly indemnities and death benefits over $150,000.

In a commercial way the association has also been able to achieve much. It has succeeded in obtaining from the Supreme Court of the United States a decision declaring that all license or occupation tax charges imposed by State or municipality are contrary to the Constitution of the United States and are restrictions upon commerce between the States, thereby freeing all commercial travellers everywhere from fine, arrest and imprisonment or the payment of insufferable and outrageous licenses for the privilege of selling goods in States and cities. At one time this license law was in effect in fifteen States and Territories and in hundreds of towns and cities, but, thanks to the T. P. A., it is to-day an unknown quantity in the United States.

It has succeeded in securing an

Members of the Convention Executive Committee of the Travelers' Protective Association

T. P. A. Convention in Terre Haute, Ind. Electric Statuary — "The Union of the North and South"

amendment to the Interstate Commerce Act permitting railroad companies to issue interchangeable mileage books and to allow with all mileage books, interchangeable or otherwise, extra or excess weight of free baggage beyond the regulation 150 pounds allowed. It is hoped that the ordinary 1,000 mile book will now be replaced by an interchangeable 5,000 mile book, sold at two cents per mile, and guarded from local use through the ticket scalpers by means of photographic identification features and other restrictions that will confine the tickets to the use of the original purchaser and protect the local traffic of the railroad companies. If this is done there may be averted a bitter period of warfare between the commercial travellers through the T. P. A. and the railroad companies. Among the concessions obtained from the railroads is a week-end ticket, that is, a ticket good going on Saturday and returning Sunday or Monday morning from within a radius of one hundred miles, for one fare for the round trip.

In the list of National officers are four chairmen of committees whose duties are of special importance. These are at the head of the national railroad committee, national hotel committee, na-

National, State, and Convention Officers of the T. P. A. Convention, Terre Haute, Ind.

Louis T. La Beaume, St. Louis,
National Secretary and Treasurer.

George S. McGrew, St. Louis,
Charter Member and First Nat'l Pres.

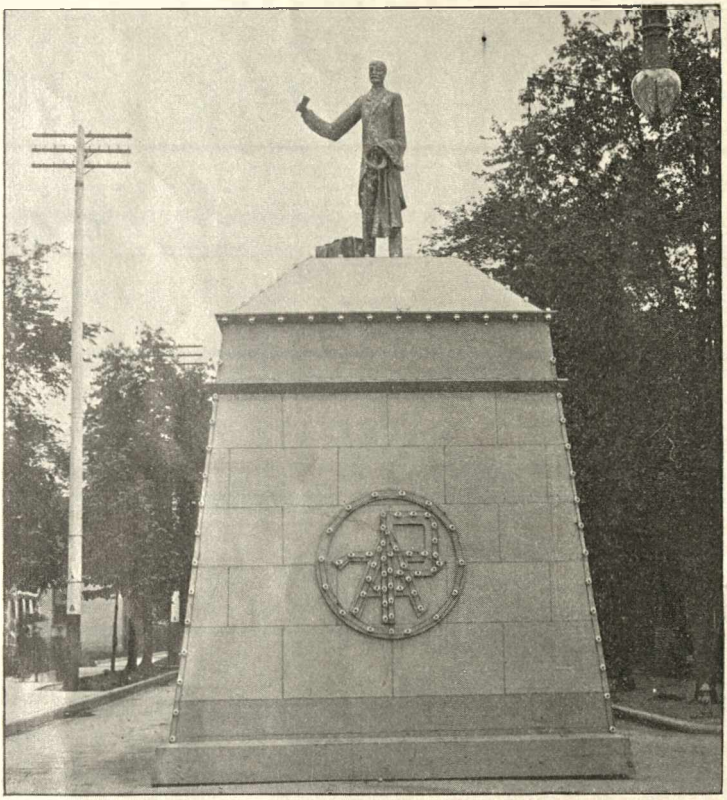
Charles R. Duffin, Terre Haute, Ind.
Chairman Convention Executive Committee and National Director.

John A. Lee,
National President T. P. A.

Isham Sedgwick, Richmond, Ind.,
President Indiana Division.

John J. Shuttleworth.
President Post G, of Terre Haute, Ind.

H. A. Pritchett, Terre Haute, Ind.
Secretary Convention Executive Committee and Chairman Convention Press Committee.



T. P. A. Convention in Terre Haute, Ind. Electric Statuary — "On the Road"

tional legislative committee and national press committee. The legislative committee has presented in Congress a bill to establish a new member in the President's cabinet to be known as the Secretary of Commerce, who shall promote and protect internal commercial interests and also look after our foreign commerce. Another bill before Congress is to provide for an appropriation of $250,000 to erect a suitable legation building in the City of Mexico for the use of the ministerial and consular legation. It is said that such a building and evidence of friendship on the part of our government would have the effect of largely increasing our trade with Mexico.

Travellers have found the importance of the national hotel committee through the courtesies that have been shown them where they have worn the T. P. A. button. Improvements in hotel service have been secured and recently more than one thousand hotel proprietors have agreed to make no charge for sample rooms and for fires in rooms occupied by members of this association.

The employment department at St. Louis furnishes to employers lists of first-class, reliable commercial travellers who are out of employment or who desire to change from one line or territory to another.

The association has earnestly and persistently indorsed and advocated a national bankrupt law.

But forgetting the commercial value

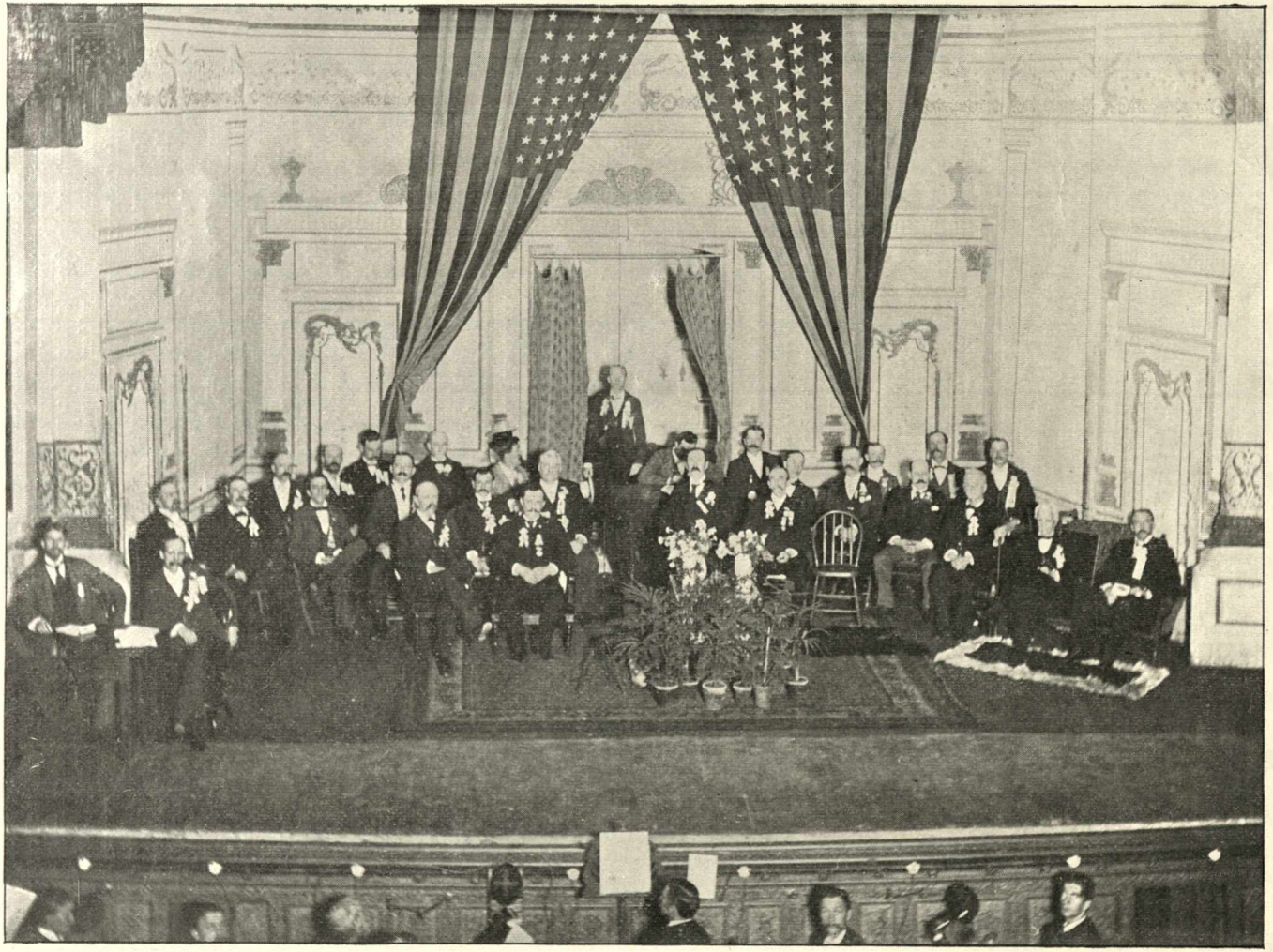
of membership in this great organization there are few members who have not received many times the return of their membership fees in the pleasure and profit received by a wider acquaintance with the members of their profession. Few persons outside of the ranks realize the full sense of the term, "a fit of the blues," as does he who for days and often weeks at a time is away from home and those friends who are truly interested in his welfare. It is then that the little button of blue and white with its three mystic letters, worn in the lapel of the coat, proves to be more than an Aladdin's lamp. The little disc has introduced thousands of travellers and made friends when they were most needed. Then to the member of a live Post who "cannot spend Sunday at home this week" there is a partial relief from the sound of those awful words as he drops his grip on the car seat and thinks of the delightful Post rooms at the "town ahead."

Great numbers of the travelling men now arrange to have their vacations during the national convention of the association, which is held annually in some city of special interest and beauty and is followed by an excursion party. In 1890 the convention was held at Denver, Col., where Mr. George S. McGrew, of the firm of George D. Barnard & Co., of St. Louis, was elected national president. Mr. McGrew was one of the founders of the reorganization and to the services he rendered during the three years of his presidency is due much of the prosperity of the order. The convention of 1891 was called to order in Little Rock, Ark.; the following year it was at the historic resort of Old Point Comfort. In 1893 the delegates were hospitably entertained at Peoria, Ill., the convention being followed by an excursion to Chicago with the closing exercises in the Missouri Building on the World's Fair grounds. John A. Lee, editor of the *St. Louis Interstate Grocer*, and an old time traveller, was this year elected to succeed President McGrew, who desired to retire from the presidency. In 1894 the convention went to Milwaukee, Wis.; and the following year to San Antonio, Texas, where the delegates from Terre Haute, Ind., succeeded in obtaining the convention of '96. A beautiful souvenir presented to the delegates of the convention by the Terre Haute members was an illustrated booklet entitled, "Terre Haute of To-day."

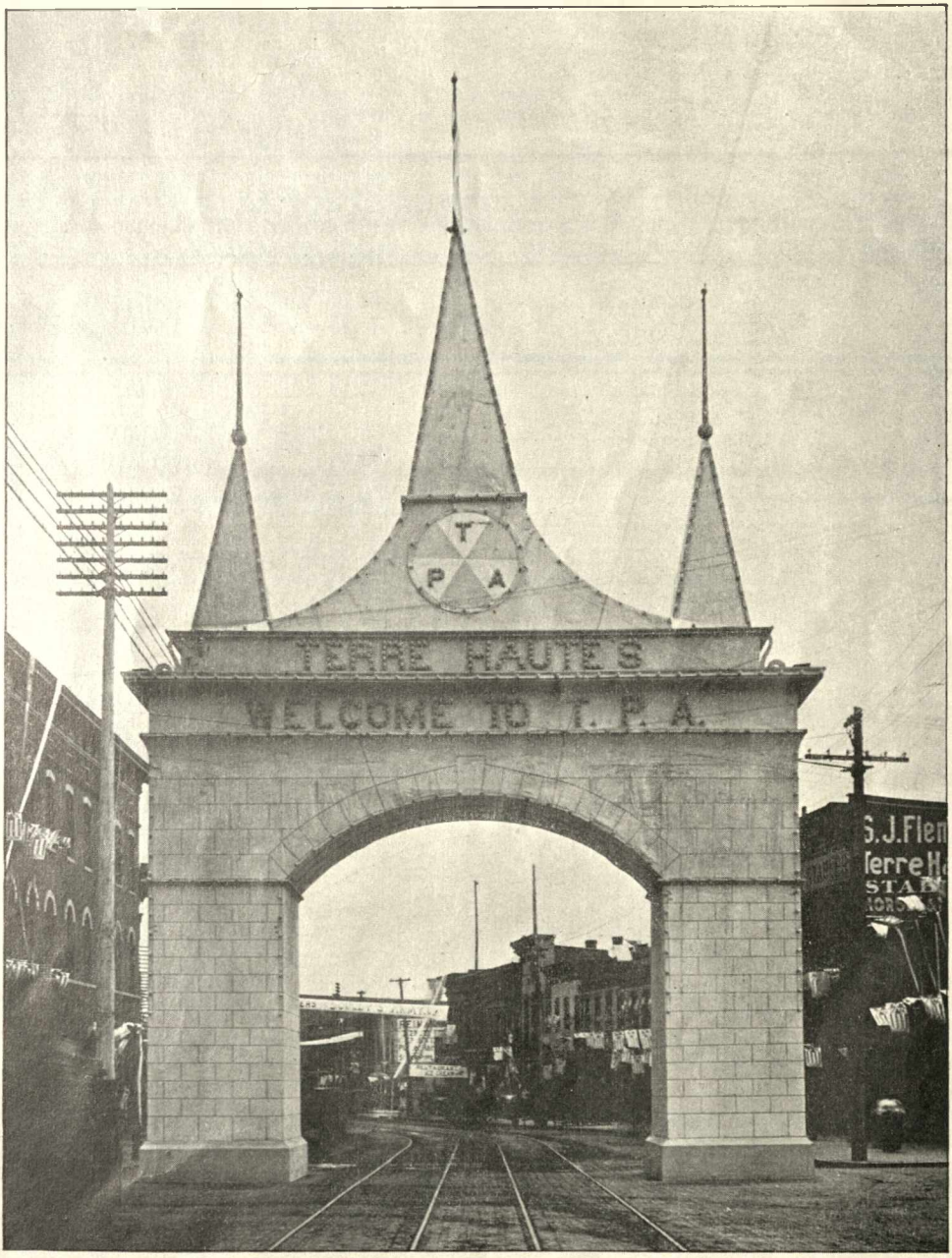
Post G of Terre Haute, whose members this year proved themselves to be genuine hosts, has had a remarkable history. It was organized March 19, 1892, with sixty-nine members, the largest charter Post ever organized, and went into the State convention forty-three days later with 131 members. When it was a year old it had 303 members, which at that time was the largest membership of any Post in the United States.

The Terre Haute Post has one of the handsomest suites of rooms in the city, consisting of an elaborately furnished reception room and parlor, assembly room and billiard parlor. During the entire year preceding the convention the members of Post G looked forward to the event and the many novel methods of entertainment and the interesting features presented during convention week were the crowning successes of earnest efforts.

The seventh annual national convention began on Tuesday, June 2, and continued until the afternoon of Friday, June 5. Monday was observed as reception day, when the larger number of delegates arrived, although the Pennsylvania division, which was first on the scene, reached the city on Sunday. Committees from Post G met the incoming trains at stations several miles from the city and telegraphed the number of delegates. Arriving at the city carriages were taken to the clubrooms of Post G., the Terre Haute Club House and the hotels where committees of ladies extended a welcome on behalf of the city to the travelling



Scene on the Stage at the Opening Session of the T. P. A. Convention, Terre Haute, Ind. (From a flashlight photograph)



T. P. A. Convention in Terre Haute, Ind.—The Electric Arch of Welcome.

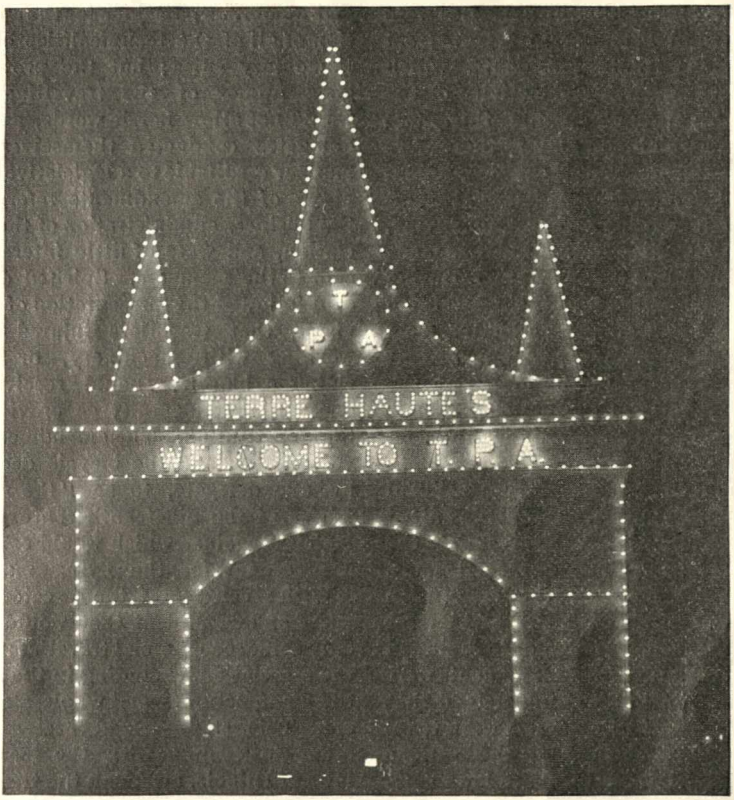
men and visiting ladies, many of whom accompanied their husbands and brothers to the convention.

The decorations of both the business and residence portions of the city were wonderful, because of their number and the variety and beauty of the designs. Thousands of the T. P. A. flags were displayed, together with national flags, while the word "Welcome" rippled in bunting and flashed from electric lights. An American flag, 39 by 69 feet, said to be the largest in the country, was loaned to the city by E. O. McCormick, general traffic manager of the Big Four Railroad, who has been a constant friend of the travelling men. An arch, beautifully proportioned, measuring eighty-five feet to the top of the central flagstaff, and thirty-eight feet between the outer base lines, spanned Wabash Avenue, the city's principal thoroughfare. It contained the inscription: "Terre Haute's Welcome to T. P. A." and, in the crown of the arch, the T. P. A. emblem. At night the arch was illuminated with almost a thousand electric incandescent lamps, all of pure white, making the beautiful structure appear as if built of crystal, and forming one of the most gorgeous electrical displays ever seen in the State. The lamps on the emblem were controlled by an automatic switchboard by means of which the letters "T. P. A." were illuminated in succession, and on the fourth change appeared together. Vanishing lights in T. P. A. monograms were also seen on the bases of three enormous pieces of statuary, which adorned prominent street intersections. These pieces measured thirty feet to the top of the bronze statuary, and represented three facts in the commercial world: The world as the travelling man's territory; the travelling man on the road with grip and mileage book; and the union of the North and South, as brought about largely by the influence of the travelling men, who have spread the sentiments of peace and prosperity through commercial intercourse. The base of the latter piece contained, in addition to the large T. P. A. monogram, two brilliant electrical devices that as they revolved blended into harmonious blazes of light and color.

Suspended from an elevated tramway on one side of Wabash Avenue was a travelling man's grip, illuminated with electric lights, bearing the ever-present T. P. A., and by means of electric power travelled back and forth the length of the block in which were located the convention headquarters.

The electrical decorations were under the supervision of Russell B. Harrison, son of ex-President Harrison, and president of the Terre Haute Street Railway Company.

At half-past ten Tuesday morning the opening session of the convention was held in Naylor's Opera House, with delegates present from the four corners of the nation, from Massachusetts to Texas, and from Washington to Florida. The illustration is from a photograph of the stage, taken by flashlight at the beginning of the session. On the platform were seated many of the distinguished men of the T. P. A., the city and the State. The opening ceremony was the T. P. A. hand-shake, being a unique fluttering of the hands of the delegates as they arose to their feet. This "shake" was frequently given by the convention to speakers or members whom they desired to honor. In a grand chorus the travellers sang "Nearer My God to Thee," and then listened to a fervent prayer by the national chaplain, Rev. Alonzo Monk, of Macon, Ga. Addresses of welcome were delivered by Mayor Fred A. Ross, on behalf of the city, and Governor Claude Matthews, on behalf of the State, with responses by Isham Sedgwick, president of the Indiana division, and Hon. John A. Lee, the national president. Hon. William E. McLean extended the greeting of the business men of Terre Haute. Hon. John S. Harwood, chairman of the national legislative com-



T. P. A. Convention in Terre Haute, Ind.—Photograph of the Electric Arch at Night

mittee, and a member of the Virginia Legislature, delivered an eloquent address, entitled, "Foot-Prints of Time," which referred to the advancements in the commercial world. The voice of Hon. R. W. Thompson, the "Grand Old Man of Indiana," rang with eloquence as he spoke from personal knowledge of "Commerce, its Transition from 1830 to 1896." "The Drummer, Old and New," was a unique and humorous address by the Hon. Jerry M. Porter, of Paducah, Ky.

Tuesday afternoon, while the delegates were engaged in a preliminary business session, the visiting ladies were entertained by the Terre Haute ladies, at the Terre Haute Club. At night was the grand illuminated street pageant, composed of delegations of T. P. A. men, military and uniformed companies, bands of music, and eighteen allegorical floats, designed and built by John H. Wilson, a scenic artist of Indianapolis. The most elaborate of these floats were those representing "Indiana," "Morning," "Music," "Nymphs of the Sea," "Washington Crossing the Delaware," "After the Battle," "The South Befo' the Wah," "Venus," "King Cotton," "Princes of the Orient," and "Night." Other features were the displays by the city fire department and the Wabash Cycling Club.

Wednesday the ladies enjoyed a carriage drive to points of interest, and an exercise in gymnastics by classes in physical culture, at Coates College for

Women. Meanwhile the delegates were interested in listening to reports from the various State presidents, which told of the growth and activity of the T. P. A. throughout the thirty-two States in which, on May 1, there were 10,816 members. President Max Robinson, of Georgia, attracted special attention by tendering a report in rhyme, after the reading of which he was made poet-laureate of the association. During the forenoon session the convention listened to an eloquent greeting from the South by Homer I. Wilson, of Fort Worth, Texas. In the afternoon the annual reports of the national officers were submitted, after which the convention went into executive session to act upon the report of the national railroad committee. Wednesday night an entertainment was given at the Opera House in honor of the delegates.

Thursday morning the convention again went into executive session for the further consideration of the railroad committee's report. No statements were made public, but it is understood that the delegates will do active work to influence the members of the various State Legislatures to enact laws compelling a general passenger rate of two cents per mile, similar to the existing laws of New York. The delegates were disappointed in not getting the low rates to the convention that they had expected, and during the convention expressed a bitterness of spirit toward the railroad traffic associations, whose actions with regard to rates, the T. P. A. asserts, materially reduced the size of their delegations at the conventions. Heretofore, in its continued fight for two-cent rates, the T. P. A. has simply asked for the concession on 5,000 mile books, but now a two-cent rate will be agitated for the travelling public in general. On convening again in open session the revision of the constitution was brought up, and with the consideration of the proposed amendments ensued a lively session. There were many able arguments advanced, and numerous occasions for the application of all of the technicalities of parliamentary rules; but the proverbial good humor of the travelling men would not allow harsh words, and the delegates conducted themselves in a manner creditable to a legislative body. Many of the amendments referred to the business administration of the association, and were of little interest except to the members. Spirited discussion followed the presentation of a provision that travellers injured while working with machinery, or while riding a bicycle, should receive but one-half the indemnity as provided in the constitution. The amendment was voted down, and the bicycle declared, by one delegate, to be "the motive power of the nineteenth century," to legislate against which would establish a precedent for the flying machine.

With much regret the directors proposed an amendment that would allow only actual commercial travellers to join the association, excluding in the future the manufacturers and wholesale dealers. This step seemed necessary in order to comply with the insurance laws of Illinois, although the travellers were reluctant to exclude their employers, whose counsel and co-operation has been greatly beneficial to the organization. The matter was finally referred to the national officers, with full power to act, but fortunately a new amendment, incorporated the following day, left this motion inactive, and the association will continue to foster equally the patronage of employer and employee.

The delegates had this day entered into continuous session, not to adjouru until the business of the convention was completed, but it was now long past the noon hour, the amending of the constitution was not half disposed disposed of, and long afternoon and evening programmes of entertainment had been arranged by the citizens. Business or pleasure was the question before the convention. A decision was

brought about in an unexpected manner. H. I. Drummond, vice-president of the Drummond Tobacco Company at St. Louis, and one of the directors of the Missouri division, arose and stated that if the delegates would accept the invitations of the city he would personally defray the expenses of the entire convention for the extra session. This is one example of many of the kindly feeling which the manufacturers of the country have for the T. P. A.

The afternoon entertainment was a programme of field sports at the fair grounds, one of the features being a basket ball game for the championship of the State, between Terre Haute and Crawfordsville, in which the Terre Haute Y. M. C. A. team won the undisputed State championship. Other events were exhibition and time races by bicyclists and trotting horses around Terre Haute's famous "2:01 1-2 race course."

In the evening a grand reception and ball was tendered to visiting delegates and ladies, at the Terre Haute House and adjoining pavilion. The souvenir programmes pictorially represented the city's growth from Fort Harrison, in 1812, to the Terre Haute of to-day.

At Friday's session an address on "The Drummer's Wife" was delivered by Rev. H. I. Wilson, of Texas, who eulogized the American home. The most important amendment added to the constitution is one which invests the national directors with power to make a special assessment whenever the condition of the finances may require it. This action was important, because the insurance laws of many States, particularly of Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois made it illegal for the association to solicit members until this clause was inserted in the constitution.

The election of officers brought forth a number of eulogistic speeches in praise of Hon. John A. Lee, of St. Louis, who has served as national president with marked ability for three years, and to whom probably more than to any other one man is due the present success of the association. Mr. Lee was unanimously re-elected. National Secretary and Treasurer Louis T. La Beaume, of St. Louis, and three national directors,—John J. Knight of Dallas, Texas, C. H. Wickard of St. Louis, and W. A. Kirchhoff of St. Louis, continue in office until next year. The remaining officers elected at the convention were: First vice-president, Joseph Wallerstein, of Richmond, Va.; second vice-president, William H. Heegaard, of Chicago, Ill.; third vice-president, L. C. Cardinal, of Montgomery, Ala.; fourth vice-president, George F. Burchard, of Little Rock, Ark.; fifth vice-president, Alexander Kunze of Portland, Ore.; national directors, Carl M. Aldrich, of Peoria, Ill.; Ernst Robyn, of St. Louis, and Charles R. Duffin, of Terre Haute; chairman national railroad committee, E. E. Smith of Atlanta, Ga.; chairman national hotel committee, Benjamin F. Hoffman, of Lafayette, Ind.; chairman national legislative committee, Hon. John S. Harwood, of Richmond, Va.; chairman national press committee, J.M. Benish, of Houston, Texas; chairman national employment committee, Hoyt A. Winslow, of Fond du Lac, Wis.; and chaplain, Rev. Alonzo Monk, of Macon, Ga.

After the report of the committe on resolutions, Sergeant-at-Arms Aloys Jacobs presented his hoop pole (emblematic of Indiana), the delegates united in the T. P. A. hand-shake, and the convention adjourned, the delegates to assemble next year in Nashville, Tenn.

THE BRIDGE DISASTER AT VICTORIA, B. C.

By C. H. Gibbons

THE bridge disaster at Victoria on the afternoon of May 26, which came as an abrupt and terrible termination to the carnival of sports arranged by the citizens of the British Columbia capital in honor of the birthday of their Queen, will pass into history as the most shocking catastrophe of the kind since the collapse of the Tay River bridge many years ago. Fifty-five lives are known to have been sacrificed in this recent calamity, and, most sad of all to relate, this wholesale slaughter of men, women, and little children cannot be accepted as an accident in the true sense of the word, inasmuch as the civic authorities had been repeatedly warned by persons competent to pass an opinion, that the bridge which gave way under the weight of the car crowded with pleasure-seekers, was rapidly becoming unfit for service, and could not be expected to sustain the extra pressure of giving passage to the multitude who would naturally cross over it on their way to witness the sham battle at Fort Macaulay that was to have been the crowning feature of the celebration. Even on the morning of the disaster, Captain William Grant, whose home is at the city end of the broken bridge, telephoned to the City Hall that the structure was shaking badly with every car passing over it. "If you don't do something quickly," he said, "the whole thing will give way, and you'll have a frightful loss of life to be responsible for." He was assured that the bridge would be attended to in good time, but nothing was done, and as a result scores of homes are to-day desolate, and the emblem of mourning is everywhere to be seen in the afflicted city.

Car No. 16, which carried so many to a sudden and terrible death, was the largest and best equipped of the rolling stock of the Consolidated Electric Railway Company, and had a seating capacity of forty. It was the heaviest car in the company's service, with a weight of seven tons, and was the one which three years ago, while carrying a crowd of Queen's birthday holiday-makers to Esquimalt, caused the bridge to give upwards of four feet. On that occasion Harry Talbot, who was conductor on the last trip of the fated car, and whose mangled body was recovere d two days after the disaster, acted as motorman; it was owing to his presence of mind in turning on full current that the tragedy was not enacted three years ago. Naturally one would think that the authorities would have profited by that warning, and made the bridge doubly secure. They did nothing more, however, than put in a few extra braces, and refloor the structure, which was never designed for street-car traffic, and should never have been called upon to bear it. It was a combination wood and iron affair, spanning Victoria Arm at a high tide depth of four fathoms. The two Whipple truss through spans were each 150 feet in length, and not in any way connected by strong metal, while leading to them were two Pratt truss deck spans of 120 feet each, and 105 feet of wooden approaches, making the total length of the bridge 645 feet. The superstructure was supported by five Cushing piers, each pier being formed by two clusters of piles, surrounded by an iron cylinder of quarter-inch plate, the interstices being filled in with broken stone, and grouted with cement mortar. For the service for which it